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The doctrine of the Naqshabandi order: a study of mysticism in Islam

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Madelain Farah Habib for the Master of Art in Teaching

Date thesis is presented Dec 17, 1966

Title The Doctrine Of The Naqshabandi Order: A Study Of Mysticism In Islam

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(Major Professor)

The word mysticism in the English language has been corrupted and abused by its different usages in the various disciplines such as religion, poetry, and philosophy. In Islam the only word which refers to a mystic is a Sufi. Sufism, according to its adherents, is the highest form of human experience, the ultimate reality of God. The Sufi theme is "Know thyself and thou wilt know God."

Sufism has been considered by Sufis and by Orientalists as the ancient school of wisdom, of quietism, of attaining the highest union and of purification of the soul. It embodies the strains of various philosophies and religions. These strains are Christian, Neo-Platonic, Gnostic and Indian ascetic and religious philosophy.

The Naqshabandi tariqa stresses the importance and knowledge of the preceding shaykhs, their character and

their virtues. Knowledge of the silsila (chain) which traces its inception to Muhammad is also very important. This is most significant to the murid (follower), because he must submit to the shaykh and trust him implicitly in order to model his life after him, leading him to spiritual virtue. Not only spiritual virtue is transmitted through the chain but the gift of grace, given by God, to the one who repents and lives according to the tariqa. That is to say, the silsila functions as a communicator between the hearts and the Light of God, which is grace.

Having achieved this stage and with the art of concentration and contemplation, the true believer can know God. Thus the aim of contemplation is spiritual union with the One. It is achieved when the murid practices the doctrines of the Naqshabandis, that of Repentance, Dhikr and Prayers of the Masters. There are prescribed rituals and practices in this attainment that must be adhered to religiously. However, this fulfillment is not within reach of every murid, but the Naqshabandis claim that reciting the dhikr (litany) is the easiest and simplest path to the One. What is discussed here are three important inter-related aspects of the Naqshabandi tariqa: doctrine, spiritual virtue (moral and ethical), and an art of concentration.

The question now is what are the social implications of Sufism? Sufism sprang and was nurtured, as in other

religions, as a result of general conditions and causes within the structures of the society. Sufism was not only one of the factors that expressed the spirit of society in religious and social terms, it was also a way of life to a Muslim. When man in society finds anxieties and conflicts in a given path, there has to be alternate routes of departure, if not, then some conceptualization of thoughts and ideas must stem to fill the vacuum for him. If there are too many external obstacles, then an internal reign takes a hold to give meaning and order to man's existence and self fulfillment. If man cannot find spiritual and intellectual answers inwardly, he must find order and meaning in the external world. The balances must be met in society and the Naqshabandi Sufi found it in concentration and contemplation.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE NAQSHABANDI ORDER:

A STUDY OF MYSTICISM IN ISLAM

by

Madelain Farah Habib

A THESIS

submitted to

PORTLAND STATE COLLEGE

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the requirements for the
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PREFACE

The Naqshabandi tarīqa is examined from the doctrinal as well as the social point of view. The first chapter lays the matrix from which to discuss these two aspects of Naqshabandi Sufism. Sufism has many facets which are touched on only lightly in hopes of stimulating the general reader to inquire and do research in the areas in which he is most interested. As to the scholar I ask for his patience for such an attempt by a neophyte.

The silsila is generally the main stream of any given tarīqa and to the Naqshabandis it is very significant. For them, the silsila manifests the unseen and seen leaders of the tarīqa which is one doctrinal aspect the knowledge of which is very important in their initiation. Because by prayers and contemplation of the shaykhs in the silsila, the murīd can invoke the spirituality of the unseen, thus unifying the hearts of the believers. Through the knowledge of the silsila the murīd can seek spiritual virtue, which is the theme in essence of the second chapter. Chapter three concentrates on the doctrine of the Naqshabandi tarīqa. The embodiment of this doctrine in a given session to seek mystical union with God is the subject of Chapter four.

The transliteration system used in the thesis is one adopted by the Encyclopedia of Islam. The only deviation from this system which I wish to pursue is in the letter "qāf." It is represented here by the letter "q" instead of "k." No attempt is made to change titles of books or authors' names, they are presented as they appear in the literature.

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As I come around the last corner in my intellectual development at Portland State College, the list of professors and librarians to whom thanks should be extended is very long. I was fortunate to have as my thesis professor and chief advisor, a Sufi and a poet, Mr. Nazeer ElAzma with whom I spent much time and effort in translating and understanding the nuances of difficult Arabic passages and whose suggestions and advice had been very helpful in this complex undertaking. Sincerest thanks also goes to Mr. Jon Mandaville for serving on the thesis committee and for his criticisms; to Dr. C. Eric Lincoln who served on the committee and for his assistance, advice and intellectual stimulation. Special indebtedness and thanks to Dr. Frederick Cox who served and assisted on my thesis committee and who with Dr. Victor Dahl were always attainable during my undergraduate and graduate work for advice, help as well as recommendations. Last but by no means least, to my thesis chairman, Dr. Charles White to whom deep gratitude and appreciation is also extended for being my advisor from the first day at Portland State. He patiently ironed out many snags in my undergraduate as well as graduate studies, and who was always behind the scenes in my intellectual endeavor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Shaykh Sayyid al-Nuwwār, a Naqshabandi, of the American University of Cairo without whose assistance, time, and effort, I could not have attained all the pertinent information and material needed for this complex subject, and in particular for his contribution in outlining the present status

of the Naqshabandi session.

Finally, special thanks goes to my mother who bore the sacrifice in alleviating many of my responsibilities to make this attainment possible. There are no words to express my gratitude; I only hope that this effort will compensate for her deprivation, patience, and understanding.

He is the Beginning and the End,
The Manifest and the Hidden,
And the Knower of all things.

Kur'ān

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THE DOCTRINE OF THE NAQSHABANDI ORDER:

A STUDY OF MYSTICISM IN ISLAM

SUFISM

CHAPTER I

Sufism, although it is translated in English as mysticism, is generally applied to a Muslim mystic, and this is the connotation used here. The Sufists are called Ahl al-Haqq (followers of the Truth). In the English language the word mysticism has been corrupted and abused by its different usages in the various disciplines such as religion, poetry, and philosophy. Sufism as it stands now in the Muslim world, however, connotes a movement and a discipline with set rituals, doctrines, a hierarchy of saints,¹ and the numerous orders demand loyalty among their adherents. In this context, then, the Sufi orders are considered by their members as the institution of the Muslim world, and they represent an important ecclesiastical element in structuring Islamic society. According to its followers, Sufism is the highest form of human experience, the ultimate reality of God. The oldest Sufi definition now extant was made by Ma'rūf al-Karkhi (d. 815 A.D.) as "the apprehension of Divine realities and

¹Sainthood in Islam is not the same as in Christianity. There is no canonization in Islam, and the word saint is used more out of reverence and custom for the person who has performed miracles and led a religious life.

renunciation of human possessions."²

Development of Sufism

Sufism in essence had no exact historical inception, but it took form in the eighth and ninth centuries. The adherents stated that it just existed from the beginning, from the time of Muhammad. Other Sufis asserted that mysticism existed prior to the Kur'^ān possibly going back to the Vedanta. The raw materials of Sufi principles and dogmas are contained in the Kur'^ān even though Muhammad left no system of dogmatic or mystical theology. The Kur'^ān for the early Sufis is not only the Word of God but is the primary means and source of drawing near to Him. The Sufis endeavored to produce in themselves the Prophet's mystical experience "by fervent prayers, by meditating profoundly on the text as a whole and in particular on the mysterious passages...concerning the Night-journey and Ascension."³ Finally, Islam recognizes the basis of religion, in broad terms, as tradition, reason, and inner light. The meaning of Sufism for a Muslim, is that it is the "knowledge of religious things that comes directly, immediately, to the individual soul, apart from any tradition, apart from any reasoning."⁴

²Reynold A. Nicholson, A Literary History of the Arabs (Cambridge: The University Press, 1953), p. 385.

³Sir Thomas Arnold & Alfred Guillaume, The Legacy of Islam (London: Oxford University Press, 1960). Chapter on "Mysticism" written by Nicholson, p. 211. The passages are from the Kur'^ān.

⁴Duncan Black MacDonald, Aspects of Islam (New York: 1911), p. 150.

Sufism has been considered the ancient school of wisdom, of quietism,⁵ of attaining the highest union and of purification of the soul. Even though it just existed from the beginning, according to Sufis later it was the origin of many orders and cults of a mystical and philosophical nature which embodied the strains of various philosophies and religions. These strains are Christian, Neo-platonic, Gnostic and Indian ascetic and religious philosophy. However, the roots of Sufism, according to Inayat Khan, had been traced to the school which existed in Egypt.⁶ From this Sufi school, he asserted, four others sprang. The first was the "Naqshabandiya which works mostly with symbolism, ritual, and ceremony. The second was the Qādiriya, which taught wisdom within the realm of the existing Islamic religion in the East. The third was the Suhrawardiya which taught the mystery of life by the knowledge of metaphysics and the practice of self-control. The fourth was the Chishtiya which represented the spiritual ideal in the realm of poetry and music."⁷ He further asserted that from the above mentioned schools, branches sprang forth in Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Tartary, Bokhara, Afghanistan, India, Siberia, and other parts of Asia.

⁵Nicholson, Literary, p. 231. Khan also uses the term "quietism" when referring to early development of Sufism.

⁶Hazrat Inayat Khan, The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan, published for International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, Geneva (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1960), vol. viii, p. 23. There are no footnotes or bibliography in his eight volumes.

⁷Ibid., p. 18.

Early Sufi Doctrine

It is interesting to note that Islam in the first century of the Hegira emphasized the fear of God, Hell, death, sin, which was all felt by the Sufis.⁸ Not until the ninth century was the central theme of Sufi teaching as the Love of God and that this Divine love should be paramount in their spiritual life. This doctrine, of the "union with God through love," inspired also all the religious and ethical concepts in Sufism.

As far as can be ascertained, this doctrine was first propounded by a woman saint and slave, Rābi'a al-'Adawiyyah (717-801) of Baṣra. She depicts the mystic's goal as an ecstatic contemplation of the Beloved and it is not definitely ascertained whether the following lines are hers, but they exemplify an early manifestation of this concept, that is of Divine love:

I love Thee with two loves, love of my happiness,
And perfect love, to love Thee as is Thy due.
My selfish love is that I do naught
But think on Thee, excluding all beside;
But that purest love, which is Thy due,
Is that the veils which hide Thee fall,
and I gaze on Thee,
No praise to me in either this or that,
Nay, Thine the praise for both that love and this.⁹

After the introduction of this new concept, it led, in the extreme form to pantheism, the recognition of God as the All.¹⁰

⁸Nicola A. Ziadeh, Sanusiya (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), p. 8.

⁹Sir Hamilton Gibb, Mohammedanism (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 132.

¹⁰Ziadeh, p. 8.

There were outer as well as inward changes in the content of Sufi doctrines. That is, leadership shifted from guardians of the law to men of the middle class; ma'rifa (experience) took the place of ilm (knowledge) in attaining spiritual purity; and a series of stages (marāhil) were elaborated by the Sufis in the pursuit of mystical experience, that is "repentance, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, trust in God, satisfaction....(all) purgative stages, which were later related to a ladder of ascending degrees of absorption ---- human nature, angelic nature, divine power."¹¹

The foundation of this Sufi theosophy rests on the premise that man must study himself, that is, "Know thyself and thou wilt know God."¹² And as he follows the path he will find certain states appearing one after another, with various degrees of permanency, until the end of the path when he knows God. This goal although is in the reach of every member, does not necessarily mean its attainment.

There are three "organs of spiritual communication: the heart (qalb), which knows God; the spirit (rūh), which loves Him; and the inmost ground of the soul (sirr), which contemplates Him."¹³ This Unity or the One Reality is represented by the Muslim mystics by various symbols such as the Source, the Perfect Goodness, the Eternal Wisdom, or the Eternal Flame, the Ultimate, the Divine Love, the Beauty Supreme and so on. The unity is shaped by deep concentration on His unity and by the reintegration of oneself in Him.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Khan, p. 15.

¹³Reynold A. Nicholson, The Mystics of Islam (London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd., 1914), p. 68.

Those who labored diligently along this path to attain Unity are best exemplified in the following poem. It represents the spirit of a Sufi's union with God as well as his ecstasy which, as we shall see is attained by a kind of autohypnotic medium. Schaya states that it is he who is blessed to see God that is able to sing His praise and through this inspiration he feels his individuality lost in God:

J'ai connu mon Seigneur par mon Seigneur
sans confusion ni doute.
Mon Essence est la Sienne, réellement,
sans manque ni défaut.
Entre nous deux il n'y a nul devenir,
et mon âme est le lieu où le Monde
caché se manifeste.
Depuis que j'ai connu mon âme
sans mélange ni trouble,
Je suis parvenu à l'union avec l'objet de mon
amour, sans qu'il y ait entre nous de
distances longues ou courtes.
Je reçois des grâces sans que rien ne descende
d'en haut, sans reproches, et même sans
motifs.
Je n'ai pas effacé mon âme à cause de Lui,
et elle n'a pas eu de durée temporelle
pour être, après, détruite. ¹⁴

The poem embodies two Sufi doctrines: the reintegration and the annihilation of the self. The reintegration of self is best expressed by Schaya as implying the "extinction of activities (fan'u-l'af'al), the extinction of quality (fana'u-l-sifāt) and the extinction of the essence (fan'u-l-dhāt) as being particularly illusive....the divine 'spark' is concealed in the depth of the heart."¹⁵

¹⁴Leo Schaya, La Doctrine Soufique de L'Unité (Librairie D'Amérique et D'Orient, Adrien-Maisonneuve, Paris, 1962), p. 101.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 96.

The Sufis owed the doctrine of the annihilation of the self (fana) to Bayazid (Abū Yazīd, d. 909) of Bistān, a renowned and authoritative Sufi theologian, who claimed that he had seen God many times. His doctrine of fana¹, which might have been influenced by Indian Monism, assumed a central position in Sufi thought.

Unity with God does not mean the cessation of the existence of individuality; rather, our existence is a thread united from the beginning with God. Ibn'ul-'Arabi's Treatise on Unity expresses it thusly:

Most of those who know God made a ceasing of existence and a ceasing of that ceasing a condition of attaining the knowledge of God and that is an error and a clear oversight. For the knowledge of God does not presuppose the ceasing of existence, nor the ceasing of that ceasing. For things have no existence, and what does not exist cannot cease to exist. For the ceasing implies the positing of existence, and that is polytheism. Then if thou know thyself without existence or ceasing to be, then thou knowest God; and if not, then not. 16

Outlets and Characteristics of Sufism

When the Sufis expounded on their theosophy, in early times, they were attacked by the established religions. Thus Sufism found an outlet for its expression in poetry and music. Music, although it is an important aspect of the Naqshabandi session, is not a central

¹⁶As quoted in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Three Muslim Sages (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), p. 114.

or a focal point towards spiritual development as in the Mawlawiya order. For the latter, music, manifested in dancing, is the medium by which union with God is attained. This art of music in Sufism was perfected in India. According to the adherence of this branch, Sufism was expressed as the art of "devotion, of idealization, reached its highest development, and their consciousness attained freedom from the external plane."¹⁷ The concept of music in Sufism is best expressed by DeVaux stating that "'....elle purifie le sang, exalte l'ame, repose l'esprit, fait tressaillir tous les membres et facilite leurs mouvements."¹⁸

Poetry is the very essence of the Eastern mystics, in expatiating on the "love to God." This mystic poetry was first expounded upon by Ibn al-Fāriḍ of Egypt, and Ibn'ul-'Arabi whose collections of mystical writings influenced the works of Persians and Turks alike.¹⁹ Thus mystic poetry blossomed in Persia and bloomed in Asia as a whole. Persia lying between the crossroads of East and West, of India, Arabia, Egypt and Greece was influenced especially by these countries' poetry and philosophy, by Socrates and Plato, and by Hinduism as well as Buddhism. Hence Persia became the melting pot for these divergent ideas and philosophies and from whence Sufism took new shape and direction. It was in this area that the works of the famous mystics such as al-Hallāj, al-Ghazzālī, and Jalāl'ul-Dīn al-Rūmī were intensified. It

¹⁷Khan, vol. viii, p. 14.

¹⁸Baron Carra DeVaux, Les Penseurs de L'Islam (Paris: Librairie Paul Geuthner, 1923), p. 239.

¹⁹Abū al-'Ala' 'Afīfī, introd. to Fusūs al-Hikm - Ibn al-'Arabi (Egypt, 1946), p. 18.

was in Asia, in particular Iran, Iraq and India, where the Naqshabandi order flourished.

Islam and medieval Christianity touched each other on the common ground of mysticism. The ascetic life of monks was emulated by Sufis. The central ideal of every Sufi school, and the striving of every mystic, has been to reach the perfection which Christ has taught in the Bible, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."²⁰

The Christian influence is best exhibited in the teachings and writings of later mystics such as al-Hallāj. Al-Hallāj (Ḥusayn Ibn Manṣūr, d. 922), a Persian and a saintly ascetic was considered frivolous, tragic, intelligent and devout man. He preached about the nature of God after he had attained the ecstatic union saying "I am the Truth (Ana'l-Haqq)."²¹ Al-Hallāj's last prayer, uttered prior to a gorey, long execution, is indicative of his great and fervent desire throughout his life to "Die into God," offering himself as a sacrifice and following the example of Jesus:

Those who adore Thee, O God, have assembled here to kill me out of their love for Thee, so that they may come closer unto Thee. Pardon them, O Lord! If Thou hast revealed to them what Thou hast revealed to me, they would not have done what they have done; and if Thou hadst concealed from me what Thou hast concealed from them, I should not have suffered this tribulation. Power and glory unto Thee in whatsoever Thou wilt! ²²

²⁰Khan, vol. viii, p. 18.

²¹This statement was also interpreted as meaning "I am God," for which al-Hallāj was condemned as a heretic and executed.

²²Robert Payne, The Holy Sword (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 219-220. This quotation also appears in Louis Massignon & Paul Kraus, Akhbar al-Hallāj, Arabic-French text (France: Imprimerie "Au Calame," 1936), p. 7.

Finally, in the words of Sir Thomas Arnold, "The homage paid to the Prophet by many of the new schools cannot hide the fact that their spiritual home is not Mecca but Athens and Alexandria."²³

Sufism structured Islamic society politically, socially and religiously. The society had to contend also with internal as well as external pressures. The external pressures stemmed from the invasion by Mongols. The internal pressures stemmed from the shari'ah (jurists) who wanted to find a law for every trifle thing in man's day to day living in order to give it meaning and form. Too much emphasis was placed by the jurists on rationality. The society felt these pressures and consequently man found an escape in Sufism. By rebelling against the formalities of the jurists, they gave the individual more freedom in reestablishing his relationship of man to man, and of man to God. Thus Sufism fulfilled and answered a deep emotional, religious, and social need of the time, be it escapism on one hand or a sincere desire to know God on the other.

THE SILSILA AND BIOGRAPHICAL ASPECT

OF THE NAQSHABANDI ORDER

CHAPTER II

The Sufis are generally in agreement as to the early generations of silsila or chain of hierarchical spiritual transference. This gives the institution of Islam some fusion and order from which the divisions and sub-divisions of dervish orders held the thread of inner light, such as grace or barakah (blessing), which guides them along their path. The lineage is considered in the following descending order: Allah (God), Jibrāyil (Angel Gabriel), Muḥammad (The Prophet), 'Alī (Fourth Caliph), and 'Abī Bakr (First Caliph).¹ Muḥammad was considered by most orders as the first Sufi. After him, according to Nasr, the "representative par excellence of Islamic esotericism (is) 'Alī Ibn 'Abī Tālib."² Most of the Sufi orders trace their origin to the first Imam, 'Alī, while many of the later Sufi sects were disciples of various Imāms, especially the sixth Imām, Ja'far al-Sādiq (88/702 - 148/765) and the eighth Imām, 'Alī al-Riḍa (around 148/765 - 203/818).³ In other words, the emphasis of the silsila is placed first on the person of the Prophet, second, on the four orthodox caliphs, especially 'Abī Bakr and 'Alī Ibn 'Abī Tālib, third, on the

¹John P. Brown, The Dervishes (London: Trubner & Co., 1868), p. 49.

²Nasr, p. 83. This statement might have an element of bias since Nasr is a Shi'a.

³Ibid., pp. 85-6.

Companions and the Companions of the Companions, and last on the great mystics of the ages.

The Silsilas of the Order

There are several interpretations and variations as to the Naqshabandi silsila. According to J. P. Brown, the Naqshabandi order is one of the "twelve original dervish orders" tracing its inception to 'Abī Bakr al-Siddīq, one of the Prophet's first Caliphs. The Prophet stated, "Whatever God poured in my heart, I in turn poured it in the heart of 'Abī-Bakr."⁴

Another source claims that the Naqshabandi order had two branches; one stemming from 'Abī Bakr and the other claims spiritual connection through the lineage of 'Alī and is called the "golden." This source further asserts that the two branches met in the great Imām, al-Shaykh 'Abd-al-Khāliq al-Ghajdawāni (d. 575/1179-80) to whose leadership the Naqshabandi order is indebted in its strength and diffusion.⁵ He was considered a humble man that observed religiously the laws which made up Islam and the order, a quality which is desired for emulation by the murīd.

The most profound interpretation encountered on the Naqshabandi silsila, however, is in Kitāb al-Mawāhib al-Sarmadiyyah. Here three

⁴al-Tasawwūf al-Islāmi, presented by Mashīkhat 'Umum al-Turuq al-Sufiyyat (Cairo: n.d.), p. 25. This is compiled by the shaykhs of the various tariqas. There are no adequate Arabic and English sources to substantiate this statement in order to pass judgement on whether it is valid or a counter attack of Shi'a assertions.

⁵Ibid., p. 26.

Naqshabandi silsilas are indicated. The first chain considers Muhammad as the City of Knowledge and the great Imām, 'Alī Ibn 'Abī Tālib as its "gate." In a metaphorical sense it could be analyzed to mean that the esoteric knowledge passes through to the exoteric world through the person of 'Alī. For this main concept not only symbolizes the imparting of the inner knowledge from one being to another but also implants it in the person of the murshid (spiritual guide) as well. The lineage after 'Alī is stated as follows:

To the lord of martyrs, 'Abī 'Abdullah al-Imām al-Husayn; to al-Imām Zayn al-'Abidīn 'Alī; to al-Imām Muhammad al-Baqir; to al-Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq; to al-Imām Mūsā al-Kādhim; to al-Imām 'Alī al-Riḍa; to Ma'rūf al-Karkhi; to al-Sirri al-Saqtī; to 'Abī al-Qāsim al-Junayd al-Baghdādī; to Shaykh 'Abī 'Alī al-Rudhbarī; 'Abī 'Alī al-Kātib; 'Abī 'Uthmān al-Maghribī; 'Abī al-Qāsim al-Jurjānī; to 'Abī 'Alī al-Farmadī shaykh of the third chain which is called the golden one....⁶

It is called "golden" because it is connected to the "purified home," or the family of the Prophet. This silsila tradition is evidently the origin for one of the aforementioned interpretations.

Taking a second look at the first chain, one can see the inclusion after 'Alī of five Imāms of the Twelver Shi'a sect....Imām Zayn al-'Abidīn, Muhammad al-Baqir, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, Mūsā al-Kāzim, and 'Alī al-Riḍa. It can be asserted that prior to the seventh Imām,

⁶Shaykh Muhammad Amīn, Khalāṣat Kitāb al-Mawāhib al-Sarmadīyah (no place of publication indicated, 1958), pp. 7-8.

Isma'īl, there were no major doctrinal schisms between the Sunnis and Shi'is save political, most important of which was the successorship of the Prophet.

The second chain considers Muhammad as the Spirit of the World followed by the "prince of believers," 'Alī. Then to

al-Hasan al-Basari; to Habib al-Ajami; to Dawūd al-Ta'i; to Ma'rūf al-Karkhi (shaykh of the first chain) and with him the two chains unite....and the union in these two chains are in body as well as in spirit as you can see. ⁷

And the third chain claims lineage from the "Lord of Existence" to the greatest trustable, 'Abī Bakr and so forth. ⁸ The shaykhs in this third chain used to discuss the gifts and means of worship as well as their lineage without denying the first two chains. The spiritual attainments in this chain supercede that of the actual physical lineage due to the dignity of God which is more appreciated and understood by the shaykhs and by all humanity. ⁹ One can deduce that J. P. Brown gained impetus for his interpretation of the order's silsila from the third chain.

The discussion so far constitutes the spiritual connection of the silsila. This is very significant but must be implemented by the biographies of known shaykhs in order to have fusion in the chain,

⁷Ibid., p. 8.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., pp. 8-9.

unbreakable, and to have a model after which the murid can pattern his actions to achieve spiritual virtue. This virtue permeates the figures in the silsila and can thus be evoked by the murid through dhikr (litany) and contemplation.

Muhammad Baha' al-Din al-Bukhari

The earliest traceable biography¹⁰ and date of inception that is found on the Naqshabandi order goes back to Muhammad Baha' al-Din al-Bukhari (717/1317 - 791/1389). He is considered the founder of the order, and it is said that it was he who had collected the sayings of al-Ghadjawani.¹¹ J. P. Brown's authoritative study of the dervishes interprets his name, which signifies "painter," as "drawing incomparable pictures of the Divine Science." He quotes D'Herbilot's interpretation that "Naqshibend" is his surname (patronimic) and the author of several works among which is the "Makamat" (lectures) dealing with various subjects.¹²

Al-Bukhari was born in a village called Kushk Hinduwan, later Kushk 'Arifan near Bukhara in Old Persia. At 18 he went to Samas to learn Sufism from Muhammad Baha'-al-Sammasi. In his system the dhikr was recited aloud; Naqshaband preferred that of 'Abd-al-Khaliq al-Ghadjawani who recited it silently. However, the adherents of

¹⁰See Appendix

¹¹The Encyclopedia of Islam, edited by M. T. Houtsma, A. J. Wensinck, et al (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1936, vol. iii, 1st ed.), article on Naqshabandi Order, p. 841.

¹²Brown, pp. 124-125. Makamat here does not refer to "stages" of spiritual ascendance.

of al-Sammāsi later confessed that Naqshaband was right, appointing al-Bukhārī as Sammāsi's khalīfa on latter's deathbed.

Al-Bukhārī went later to Nasaf to continue his studies under a khalīfa of al-Sammāsi, Amīr Kulal, then with his khalīfa, Arif al-Dik-Krāsni. He spent 12 years in the service of the Sultan and after the monarch's fall he "practiced philanthropy and the care of animals for seven years, and roadmending for another seven."¹³ Al-Bukhārī spent the last years in his village where he was buried. His sayings were collected by Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Nāfizi al-Bukhārī.

Shaykh Khalid al-Shahrazuri al-Naqshabandi

A later known biography of a Naqshabandi, who is considered to have restored the order, is of the eighteenth century by the name of 'Abū al-Bahā' Diyā' al-Dīn, Shaykh Khālīd al-Shahrazūrī al-Naqshabandi. He was born in 1190/1776-77 in the village of Qaradāgh near Sulaymaniyya in Iraq. After his early studies in Qaradāgh, followed by a period of intermittent traveling in search of knowledge, he settled in Sulaymaniyya. Even though news of his learning and understanding became widespread, he left for Sananduj in Iran to study and to master the discipline of arithmetic and the use of the astrolabe.¹⁴ Upon completion, he made several trips which included Damascus, where he came

¹³Encyclopedia, vol. iii, p. 841.

¹⁴A paper presented by Joseph Bell in a seminar on "Political Change in the Middle East," conducted by Dr. Alfred M. Halpern, at Princeton University, 1964. p.8.

in contact with Shāfi'ī traditions, and Mecca. Following his return to Sulaymaniyya, Khālīd was seeking a murshid and was told that a great holy man who could assist him was Thana' al-Dīn al-Naqshabandi who lived in Delhi and was referred to as Shaykh al-Mashayikh (a Sufi's title of Shaykh of Shaykhs) of India.¹⁵ He left for Delhi in the year 1224/1809-10.

He was initiated into the Naqshabandi tariqa (path) in less than five months and became one of the "Ahl al-Hudūr wa'l-Mushāhada."¹⁶ 'Abd Allah al-Dihlāwī, who referred Khālīd to the Shaykh al-Mashayikh, licensed Khālīd in "mystical guidance and made him his fully authorized vicar or successor (khalīfa) in the following five orders: Naqshabandiya, Qādiriya, Suhrawardiya, Kubrawiya, and Chishtiya."¹⁷ He returned to Iraq to propagate the Naqshabandi order, after which a number of social conflicts resulted in Khālīd's departure to Syria, in 1238/1822-23, where it flourished.

Naqshabandi Shaykhs in Egypt

According to Shaykh Sayyid al-Nuwār, the Naqshabandi order came to Egypt about 1900 through Damascus and Shaykh Muḥammad Gouda, the first Egyptian Naqshabandi, was buried in Minyat al-Qamḥ. 'Aziyyah, Minyat al-Qamḥ and other nearby villages are today dominantly

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 9. The quote refers to people who had seen and were in the presence of God.

¹⁷Ibid.

Naqshabandi. Although the shaykhs during Shaykh Gouda's time devoted their entire energies to religious endeavors, subsequent shaykhs followed other professions. This stems from the increasing complexity of the social structure and the demands placed by it on man. For example, today's Shaykh Ahmad,¹⁸ a traveling merchant, receives two or three hundred Egyptian pounds a year for being the order's religious leader. It is also a common practice for the out-of-town muridin (novices) to bring him butter, rice, chicken, flour, depending on their livelihood.

No matter whether the shaykh or murshid is a devout and religious ascetic or one that is partially worldly and devotes some energies to the attainment of life's necessities as is generally the case now in Egypt and elsewhere, and, according to the Naqshabandi doctrine, it is very important to know something about the preceding shaykhs. The fact is that the murid (novice) could not reach a spiritual association or esoteric affiliation between himself and those that preceded him unless he knows something about them ---- their teachings, character and way of life ---- in order to model himself after them. Amin stated that the murid must walk their paths and do their works.¹⁹ Thus, to know the virtues of the preceding shaykhs might be more important for the follower than seeing them because the

¹⁸The full name of Shaykh Ahmad was unattainable.

¹⁹Amin, p. 5.

murid might be hindered from penetrating the "delicate secrets" of the murshid's soul by their physical appearance.

The Naqshabandi teachings also stress that a murid must attach himself to the murshid, who is the heir of Muhammad and through whom God manifests His presence uninterruptedly in the silsila. It is paramount, therefore, for the murid to attach himself to a shaykh and to serve him with devout belief, faithfulness and sincerity.²⁰ The moral conduct of the murid is also stressed, he must practice good behavior and virtues and avoid vices. By doing so, the murid will ascend to the degree of contemplating God and hearing Him in the same way that the benevolent saints ('awliya'), the good believers and especially the Naqshabandi masters had done. Furthermore, it is essential for the murid to attach himself to a murshid, to protect this relationship, and to make the murshid his spiritual guide, living with him, and practicing the doctrinal rituals. The characteristics of the shaykh and his spiritual moods are then transmitted gradually to him and whatever the murshid has of perfection in spirit it is also reflected in the murid. This attachment will result in the murid's spiritual development and virtue which is the first step in transcending the silsila to God.

²⁰Ibid., p. 6.

THE NAQSHABANDI DOCTRINE

CHAPTER III

The Naqshabandi doctrine rests on the premise that the purpose for the creation of man in this life is to fulfil worshipping God without any intermediaries. As long as man is in the presence of God and full of love towards Him, he attains this end. The Naqshabandis claim that their means of worship is the "nearest and easiest" for the follower to achieve the highest level of reaching union with God.¹ This is asserted by both Imām al-Farūqi and shaykh Muḥammad Bahā' al-Dīn al-Naqshabandi.²

Worshipping is not only spiritual but has physical characteristics as well in the presence of God. These outer signs are manifestations of the ecstasy of the Union. Those who attained this divine Union would strike the ground, or would cry out like al-Hallāj "I am the Truth." As was stated earlier, the object of the path in attaining union with God is to lose one's own identity and find oneself in God. Doing so, perfection is attained by the murīd. Sufi doctrine of the divine union is undoubtedly influenced by Brahmans, Buddhists, Neo-Platonists and others.³ The emanation of all things from God and their final absorption by Him, through which man loses his individual

¹Amin, p. 7. This chapter is mainly taken from Amin's, Kitab al-Mawahib al-Sarmadiyyah, pp. 162 - 192.

²Ibid.

³Nicholson, Literary, p. 384.

self to unite with the Universal Self is one of the Sufi doctrines. There is a prescribed methodology to this fulfillment as follows.

Naqshabandi Initiation

The initiation into the Naqshabandi tariqa cannot be done except by a perfect shaykh who has experienced the path. That is, there is no way in entering the Naqshabandi order other than through the means of instruction by an expert and a wise shaykh. The secret of instruction lies firstly in the unification of the hearts of the worshippers, and secondly, linked through prayers, with the Prophet. As was noted, knowledge of the silsila is all pervasive. In recalling the silsila, by prayers, the spirits of the saints and shaykhs, the initiators, will link to the Prophet, all responding to the prayers of the true believer. Other major concepts of the Naqshabandi instruction are the concept of Repentance, Dhikr, and Prayers of the Masters.

The Concept of Repentance

If God wants to show one of his servants ('abd) the right way (path) he will give him repentance as a gift. This is depicted as the "angel of every goodness."⁴ But before repentance is attained, there are stipulated conditions which must be met and exercised by the faithful: Regretting - past disobedience towards God; Determination - in not going back to bad deeds; and to practice virtue.⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 166.

⁵Ibid.

The doctrine of repentance is very important for it is the first step in purgation and purification of the soul. Repentance by man as a whole is repenting from sins committed. With repentance the darkness of the heart will disappear but a trace will remain through recalling God (dhikr) which will enlighten the heart of the believer until it becomes like a lamp.⁶ Because of its light the good morals are reflected like a mirror in the murid's heart and the sight of the believer will extend to the holy Presence. For he who repents with sincerity and real devotion, God will change his heart to goodness and divert him from evil. This will be complete conversion to the Truth. The conversion will also change the direction of his zeal from the seen to the unseen, the very essence of things, and thereby the heart will accept the Divine revelation. God said "Repent all to God, O believers in order to succeed," while the Prophet stated "O people, repent to God because I repent to Him 100 times a day," as was reiterated by Muslim.⁷

The Concept of Dhikr

Dhikr or litany, in addition to repentance, is one of the most important articles of the Naqshabandi tariqa. The goal of the tariqa is to purify the heart and to detach it from everything else except God. The dhikr brings about the love of God to the heart of the believer up to the point that there is no one but He. Good morals and

⁶Anin, p. 166.

⁷Ibid. Muslim is a person narrating on Traditions and does not refer to a follower of Islam.

virtues evolve from reciting the dhikr, the way leading to God.

Reciting the dhikr, the shortest path to God, is highly recommended by the Holy Kur'ān, by Tradition, and by the instructions of the Masters.⁸

Anīn discusses a number of quotations to support the above supposition of the sources as well as the importance and virtue of performing the dhikr. It is sufficient to state some of these quotations here.

God said "Remember Me, I remember you," also stating "O you believers, remember God always,"⁹ that is, whether standing, or sitting, or all positions. The believers were described by God in the Kur'an as those who remembered the name of the Lord morning and evening. The Prophet in asserting the importance of recalling God said "Do I tell you about the best of your deeds, the most profitable before the Lord, and the highest degree in the sight of God, and that which is better for you than spending gold or consuming paper, and that which is better for you from meeting your enemies and cutting each other's throats....,"¹⁰ it is reciting the dhikr, the most important activity. This narration on Tradition was related by Ahmad. While Turmaudhi related a question that 'Abī Sa'īd al-Khidrī asked the Prophet: "Which means of worship ranks highest on the judgement day," the answer was "Those who recall God many times;" al-Khidrī continued "Is he better off than al-Ghāzi in the eyes of God?" The Prophet said "If al-Ghāzi strikes the atheist and polytheist until the sword breaks bludgeoned by their blood, those who

⁸Ibid., p. 167.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

recall God are higher in rank than him."¹¹ The Prophet further stated "He who is unable to worship all night long, or refrains from spending money for God's sake or refrains from struggling against the enemy, let him recall God through dhikr," as related by al-Tabarani and al-Dazzas; and finally, the Prophet said "Remember God many times until it is said you are majdhūb (entranced)."¹²

Two Basic Formulae of Dhikr

There are two formulae in reciting the dhikr. The first is to mention God (Allah), and the second is by saying "There is no God except Allah (la illāha illa-llāh)."¹³ The dhikr must take place after the faithful finishes his prayers. He is supposed to sit down, closing his eyes, arresting all senses, and observing that God is looking, hearing, and seeing him. At this time he remembers that he is sinful, void of all good deeds and useful knowledge, and says "God forgive me" 25 times.¹³ He must seek the full meaning of forgiveness when uttering this phrase. This is followed by reading al-Fātiha (the opening chapter of the Kur'ān), once, and Sūrat al-Ikhḥās three times dedicating their rewards to the Prophet and to the shaykhs of the various sects and especially to the Naqshabandi shaykhs.¹⁴ Note that a Naqshabandi's prayers are dedicated to shaykhs outside their silsila as well. The

¹¹Ibid., p. 168. Al-Ghāzi refers to a participant of the Holy War.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 177.

¹⁴Ibid.

reason for this is that there is no rigid doctrinal delimitations between one order and another.

The explanation of the supplications and how the believer must pray are vivid and thorough. For example, after the above prayers the murshid explains to the believer that he must perceive himself as if he is breathing his last breath and his soul is taken out of his body, departing it entirely; and that he was cleansed and shrouded and carried in a coffin to his grave and was buried.¹⁵ Through this concentration and spiritual exercise he would attain one realization, that nothing would be of help except his good deeds. Then he is supposed to open his eyes and the imagery will disappear.

Physical death is a desirable objective of a Sufi and by it he attains permanent union with the Divinity. By practicing the dhikr his flight in Union is temporal and not eternal. This is still not within reach of every faithful for he must begin with the rudiments of self-purification and devotion which is brought about by living virtues. Is this not analogous to the Lutheran doctrine that man cannot be saved by faith alone?

The faithful is supposed to evoke into his imagination the image of his murshid, seeking from his spirituality the blessings of the silasila and remaining in this state for a period of time in order to to meet with his heart.¹⁶ This is what is termed by Naqshabendis as an

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

association or link (rābitah). The longer the murīd remains in this state, the greater are his benefits. The unity for Truth is brought about through association while in this state of dhikr, but if the murīd mentions the name of God, this recalling places him in His presence.

After this stage the murīd must close his lips and place his tongue on the roof of his mouth concentrating all his senses in the heart, which represents the seat of Greatness. God is a self without duality or similarity, so the believer must make his heart full of this meaning. This is called wuqūf galbi (heart-like dedication, or the heart's complete self attachment to God), and this must prevail in the whole stages of dhikr and elsewhere as much as possible.¹⁷ The heart is stimulated by the utterance of the word "Allah," continuing to do so as long as possible without counting the times it is said. If the murīd is asked to practice the dhikr by means of the word "Allah," he must do so. If on the other hand, he is asked to practice the dhikr by uttering the holy words "la illaha illa-llah," the murīd must proceed as follows:

Arrest your breath below the navel and refresh it with the word "lā," from there up to the head by a long "lā," then drop your head to your right shoulder by the word "illāha" and then both words "illa-llāh" to your heart again from where you started. Arrest the breath and then release it after one repetition or three or five times. After the release of every breath you say with your heart and tongue "illāhi 'anta maqsūdi wa ridāka matlūbi (O God, you are my aim and Your consent is

¹⁷Ibid.

my desire)." With a simultaneous uttering "And Muhammad is the Messenger of God," at the end of every breath. ¹⁸

This takes great effort and deep concentration. The murīd must practice the dhikr laboriously until he achieves al-dhuhūl (trance, or absence from everything else except God), until he is consumed completely by divine Greatness. And if he is dominated by al-dhuhūl, he reaches al-murāqabah, that is, he achieves beholding the Truth. Thus the dhikr is the only means by which the murīd becomes closer to God and more lovable by Him. The last stage is, firstly, the attainment of murāqabah, and secondly, the termination in the illuminating states (ahwāl) which cannot be expressed by words or by gestures. This reminds us of the concept of Nirvana in Indian theosophy, the complete return to God.

The sincere murīd must confirm himself to the subscribed manners of the ṭarīqa, in the dhikr and elsewhere. Those manners are many but he must always be in the state of ablution, attaching himself to the congregation, and fulfilling the religious rights. The dhikr should take preference over other forms of supplementary prayers, some of which must be exercised between the evening and the night prayers. These prayers are especially ordained for the murshid, but as for the murīd, he must be absorbed by practicing the dhikr and follow the murshid's advice. The murshid also prescribes for him the manners of behavior. He instructs the murīd to avoid mixing with those who do not believe

¹⁸Ibid., p. 178.

in the tariqa, because such a relationship will result in the severity (qaswah) of the heart.¹⁹ The murid must have complete humbleness and he must always seek the righteous path because those who do otherwise will not reach the Truth.

al-Jadhbah

It is difficult to render full significance to the term "al-jadhbah" other than signifying, literally, that it is being "attracted" to God, i.e., entranced. It is a Sufi state of deserting the world and being attracted completely by God. This state is simply rendered in English as the "trance."

The jadhbah was a controversial issue between the Sufis and jurists, the latter denied such a state and accused the Sufis of hypocrisy. Whatever the controversies may be the Sufis contend that this is the essence of the dhikr. The jadhbah is not within the reach of every believer, it is a natural consequence only if the believer has a humble heart, is modest, pure and sincere. This is the highest gift that can be attained, to be in the Divine presence. The Prophet said regarding those who do believe in the jadhbah "God I take refuge with Thee from he whose heart does not fear."²⁰

The Sufis, in counter-attacking the jurists' denial of the jadhbah and in order to cement their position, attempted to recount stories from

¹⁹Ibid., p. 179.

²⁰Ibid., p. 190.

Traditions about the Companions of the Prophet who reached such a state. For example, Salmān al-Fārisi and 'Umar Ibn'ul-Khaṭṭāb attained the jadhbah during the recitation of the Kur'ān. It is said that 'Umar Ibn'ul-Khaṭṭāb passed out while reading " 'Idha al-Shams Kuwwarat" from the Kur'ān.²¹ He fell in a trance and began to strike the ground. Salmān al-Fārisi, on the other hand, attained the jadhbah while reading another Surah, he "shouted, placed his head between his hands, and went out of his house wandering knowing not his direction for three days..."²² Consequently, the outer manifestations or the physical phenomena of the jadhbah fluctuated between crying or bitter crying, shouting, sighing, trembling, striking the ground, and wandering on the face of the earth semi-consciously. It is the physical expression of one of the spiritual states of the Sufis. It is crossing the borders between the physical and the metaphysical realms.

The state of the jadhbah is analogous to a state of a person enraptured by music. Teenagers today, for example, attain the outer manifestations of the jadhbah by listening to sonorous, pulsating music. While the Naqshabandis, on the other hand, reach it methodically and through concentration contrary to the Mawlawis, as we shall see, which is closer to the former. While one is the release of anxiety and tension, the other is the deepening of spiritual meaning in discovering new realms of the soul. This elevates the person to higher levels of spirituality.

²¹A. Yusuf Ali, The Holy Qur'ān (Printed by the American International Printing Co., Washington, D. C., 1946), p. 502.

²²Amin, p. 190.

In other words, the trance, to a Sufi, is breaking the lines or limitations between the power of reason and the power of psyche and thus being occupied with the one notion, that of communion with the Oversoul.

This further raises the issue of predestination and free-will between the jurists and the Sufis. The jurists maintain that he who attains the jadhbah has no free choice and thus raising the controversial question, does the majdhub (entranced) preserve his reason or is he insane? In answering this question, the Sufis consider the majdhub as a perfect being because of his communion with God.

Prayers of the Masters

In Anfin's book this chapter is entitled Khatm al-Khawajkân. Khatm means the "seal" or "ending" prayers of the Masters (Khawajkân).²³ Collectively the ending prayers are a special, set ritual by which the dhikr is closed. The specific prayers take place Thursday or Monday, day or night.

In essence the Khatm has a two-fold purpose, either for need fulfillment, or for spiritual closeness and attainment.²⁴ The intention of the prayer is to invoke the transmittal of the blessings of the silasila and of the shaykhs to the murid and the believer in general, and in particular, to bring certain needs and wishes for fulfillment and realization.

²³Ibid., p. 179. Khawajkân comes from the Turkish word Khoja, meaning master or teacher. The term was possibly used by Naqshabandis during the Ottoman Empire. Khālid al-Naqshabandi, as previously mentioned, was a Kurd and a restorer of the Tarīqa.

²⁴Ibid.

Before the murīd recited the Khatm, he must make sure that all doors are closed and there are no Christians or Jews among them. Even their Muslim brothers are not allowed to sit with them during the session, nor to display the divine secrets outside those who have not been initiated into the Naqshabandi ṭarīq. After this is secured, the murīd can enter in seclusion (khalwah) with permitted persons and the murshid in order to perform the prayers of the masters. They perform the supplication, praying two times, during which they read the Fātiha once and the verse of the Kursī (Throne, literally Chair) seven times. After finishing these prayers, they read the following supplication silently:

In the name of God the Beneficent, the Merciful,
 may praise be to God, the Lord of the Universe,
 the blessings and prayers be on the Master of the
 Messengers (Muḥammad), O God, the Opener of doors
 and Cause of causes, and who turns over the
 hearts and sights, Guide of the perplexed, and
 Helper of those who need help, help me O Lord,
 I depend upon You, and am delegating my matter to
 you. O, Opener, O Giver, O Reliever. And bless
 the best of his creatures, Muḥammad and his
 family and all his Companions. 25

From the content of this prayer one can deduce that its main purpose is to evoke fulfillment of wishes or material needs.

Following this prayer, the murīd reads the following ten ascribed supplications with their subscribed number of repetitions:

²⁵Ibid., p. 180. This is stated in rhymed prose and has characteristic allusions which are indicative of the Arabic style. However, its total beauty cannot be translated into English, losing some of its quality.

1. The prayer of forgiveness, 15 times
2. The recalling of the shaykhs in the silsila
3. Reading al-Fātiha, seven times
4. Praying to the Prophet, 100 times
5. Sūrat al-Ikhlās, 1001 times
6. Sūrat 'Alam Nashrah, 79 times
7. Al-Fātiha, seven times
8. Praying to the Prophet, 100 times
9. Reading of what is available from the Qur'an
10. The calling of the Khatm by reading the supplication of our master, the father (spiritual paternity), shaykh 'Umar's supplications which are mentioned in both of his books Tamwīr al-Qulūb (Illumination of the Hearts), and al-Mawāhib al-Samadiyyah (Eternal Gifts). 26

This last prayer can alternate with the recalling of the shaykhs in the silsila. Chapter Four contains other forms of prayers adhered to in the Naqshabandi session that are initiated by other shaykhs, with some variations in performance and style. These variations, however, are a matter of form and not religious or doctrinal differentiation. Even though all the sects are similar in the ways and methods of knowing God, they differ in how they reach Him and through what path. The Naqshabandis claim that theirs, the path reiterated above, is the "closest and easiest" in achieving the highest degree, the Oneness of God.

At the conclusion of the Khatm, they pass around dates, raisin and other kinds of sweets. If their prayers is one of request, this signifies optimism of the acceptance of their supplications, on the one hand, and strengthens the bond between them on the other.²⁷

²⁶Ibid. Sūrat al-Ikhlās and al-Fātiha are found in 'Alī's Qur'an pp. 1306 and 14 respectively.

²⁷Amin, p. 180.

The same ritual would also be performed for spiritual purposes, such as getting closer to God.

Many ideas, rituals, customs, pagan or otherwise, were adopted and justified by the Muslim communities because they fulfilled certain needs within the communities themselves. To pass raisins to the murid symbolizes the unity of the Sufis bond, which indicates as well the spiritual brotherhood of the believers in the faith. Is this not comparable to the offering of the holy bread by some Christian churches? The difference is a matter of degree, whereby in Christianity this symbolizes the body of Christ, in Islam it signifies the brotherhood of man.

A NAQSHABANDI SESSION

CHAPTER IV

The Naqshabandi session is a session in a given region, Egypt, and a given ritual of spiritual communication and attainment. The framework of this session was reiterated to me by Shaykh Sayyid al-Nawwar.¹ The Prayers of the Masters is a guide or framework from which to work and is preferential in toto to others, but variations by the shaykhs of the tarīqa does not mean doctrinal differences. The Khatm is lengthy, while the brevity of the prayers in the framework cited below takes an hour or two. This framework is generally adopted by Naqshabandis in Egypt for the common man. One can deduce here that the session is shortened in length, preserving the essentials, in order to cater to the spiritual needs of the adherents in a complex social structure. The session will be analysed according to its components and points of reference.

According to Shaykh al-Nawwār, the sessions can be held anywhere, in the follower's home or in a mosque, once a week, Friday or Monday. It is usually of an hour's duration but can last longer. They begin after the evening prayer, and the adherents can dribble in until 10:00 P.M. They sit cross-legged on a ḥaḥ (or carpet) in a circle. This takes place in the dark as it is believed to be more restful since it

¹Shaykh Sayyid al-Nawwār was a Naqshabandi member, and a teacher at the American University of Cairo when I was a Fulbright student in 1961-62.

enduces calm and peace. The doors must be closed so as no prayer shall reach the ears of a non-member. They drink Turkish coffee or 'irfa (made of cinnamon sticks), chatting, until eight or ten persons are present before they can commence. Women are not allowed to attend but can hold their own sessions in a different place but on the same nights.

Although the Naqshabandis originally wore caps, generally white, of peculiar shapes, many made up of gores or sections, which varies in number in different dervish orders, there is no strict adherence to the attire today. The cap was always embroidered and originally contained a verse from the Kur'an.

A Set Ritual of Communication

There is a prescribed ritual which ensues and is adhered to at every meeting. First, they commence their devotions with al-Fātiha, or the Opening, from the Kur'ān. This has been called the Lord's Prayer of the Muslims and is, therefore, an essential part of their public as well as their private worship. The Opening is then followed by a nashīd (song) from Kalām al-Nās (Word of the People). A silent dhikr follows which is repeated for about 15 minutes and is said slowly; that is, "There is no God except Allah," then simply "Allah" so that the emotional effect increases. As previously mentioned the dhikr is a shorter and simpler path by which a spiritual satisfaction can be achieved in comparison to attaining the hāl (state) which is a laborious and arduous mystic life not within the powers of every member. The stages, however, which are in essence Path, Gnosis (ma'rifa), and Truth,

according to Nicholson, "constitute the ascetic and ethical discipline of the Sufi, and must be carefully distinguished from the so-called 'states' (ahwāl) which form a similar psychological chain."²

The end result is the ascension of the highest plane of consciousness, here the seeker realises that "knowledge, knower, and known are One."³

"There is no God," then, is a phrase of denial; the nothingness of all things is to be felt.⁴ The head goes down to one side. "Except Allah" is an assertion phrase, the absoluteness of Allah's existence must be felt.⁵ The head goes down to the other side. The breathing is regulated in a certain, puffing way in the utterance of such formulae as these and the word "Allah" so that the emotional effect increases. At this point they produce in themselves a pleasant dreaminess or a strange mixture of esthetic pleasure, derived from the nerve tension and a lightly hypnotic state, and religious exaltation.

While the dhikr is being said in a swaying manner, the shaykh holds in his hands, beads, like a rosary,⁶ counting the times the phrase was repeated.....usually about 100 times. The swaying with the word "Allah" is said to help in loosening the tongue making the person restful, otherwise when said still the person becomes tired.

²Nicholson, Mystics, p. 29.

³Ibid.

⁴MacDonald, p. 162.

⁵Ibid.

⁶George Swan, An Outline for the Study of Dervishism (Cairo: Nile Mission Press, 1925). According to Swan, the use of the rosary was to induce "contemplation and ecstasy" and is borrowed from Buddhism. p. 8.

The result is that some of the muridīn become entranced or is said to have been taken by the "jalālah."⁷ The murid might pull his hair, slap his face, and fall to the ground. The state of the jalālah is when the believer perceives God and does not want to release himself from this trance. However, upon seeing these actions the shaykh says "God is living" and claps his hand as a signal for the rest to stop saying the dhikr. If the sound from the clap does not help to release the entranced individual as it does so in a hypnoidal state, the muridīn can hold the member until he is out of the trance.

A poem which is sung following the first dhikr is called "takhmīr,"⁸ a preparation as a kind of a pacifier for the second dhikr. Sūrat al-Ikhlās (Purity) from the Kur'ān follows and is said silently. It signifies the nature and qualities of God and is as follows:

Say: He is God alone;
God the Eternal;
He begetteth not,
And is not begotten;
And there is none like unto Him.⁹

During this time, the shaykh takes small stones or marbles from a bag which is in front of him in order to know the repeated number of dhikrs that has been said and places it to one side. At times a song follows if someone has a good voice. Then the third dhikr is followed by

⁷This is the annihilation of "I", and the attainment of ecstatic communion with God.

⁸Takhmīr literally means fermentation. This is applied to the preparation of the individual for the next stage.

⁹Thomas Patrick Hughes, A Dictionary of Islam (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1885), p. 466.

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Qasidat al-Munbahiyyat, which is read aloud from their prayer book.

Closing Prayer

They close with a simple and short prayer which is read openly and in unison, in a rhythmical manner. They chose this particular verse because it is "short and beautiful," but the muridin can read prayers of other orders such as that of the Shādhiliyyah. They also have a special, individual prayer which they can read later. In essence they can pray alone or in a group, with the first preference being for the latter, as it strengthens their faith and unity with the members of the tarīqa. The closing supplication is as follows:

O God, bless and preserve our Prophet
Muhammad in the beginning; and bless and
Preserve our Prophet Muhammad at all time;
And bless and preserve our Prophet Muhammad
In the High Heavens till the Day of Judgement;
And bless and preserve all the prophets and
Messengers;
And the special angels and the righteous
Worshippers of God: from the inhabitants of
The Heavens and of the earth; may God, the
Merciful and Exalted, be graciously pleased
With our lords and possessors of high esteem,
Abū-Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, 'Ali, and all
Proceeding; and all other companions of God,
And their followers till Judgement Day;
Gather us and have mercy on us with them;
In Thy mercy, O most Merciful, O God, O
Living, O Creator; there is no God but Thee;
O God, O our Lord, O Indefinite Forgiver,
O most Merciful, O God, Amin. ¹⁰

¹⁰Majma' al-Awrad al-Kabir (a prayer book, no author and n.d.),
pp. 116 - 117.

The closing supplication of the Naqshabandi session as cited above, and the closing supplication of the Khawāṭir are similar as far as their prelude is concerned but as for the rest, the Khawāṭir concludes with recalling the Naqshabandi silsila for practical reasons as mentioned in Chapter III.

Summary and Conclusions

Two main aspects of the Naqshabandi ṭarīqa has been examined, the doctrinal and the social, with heavier concentration on the former. The doctrine has been examined from the early times, dwelling on the components of the Naqshabandi doctrine, that of the concept of Repentance, Dhikr and Prayers of the Masters which are most important to the murīd in his attainment of Gnosis, or mystical union with God. The second important theses of the paper is the spiritual virtue. It is here that knowledge of the shaykhs, their moral and ethical characteristics, and of the silsila is significant for the murīd. He must submit to his shaykh or murshid and trust him implicitly in order to model his life after him leading him to spiritual virtue. He achieves this stage with the art of concentration which is the third important aspect of the paper. The art of concentration is a support and a medium through which the true believer can know God. Since this is not within reach of every murīd, the Naqshabandis claim that reciting the dhikr is the easiest and simplest path to the One.

There are relevant doctrinal observations that can be made here in enhancing our knowledge of Sufi orders. The paths of the numerous orders in attaining unification with the One varies according to the

tariqa's doctrines. It is significant to mention one, the Mawlawi order, which exemplifies an extreme doctrinal model. Even though there are some similarities, only points of departures will be mentioned. The Mawlawi dhikr is strictly a congregational prayer, while the Naqshabandi's can either be solitary or congregational. Instead of contemplation and readings from the Kur'an, the Mawlawis stress the importance of preaching, counseling, relating stories and biographies of Prophets and saints, and readings from the Mathnawi, written by Jalal'ul-Din al-Rumi.¹¹

The Mawlawis use poetry, music and dancing to be closer to God and to bring about the trance, the Naqshabandis, however, evoke it by mere contemplation and concentration in driving at the inner light. The Mawlawis use as a prop musical instruments, such as the flute and tamborine, not simply to provoke the senses but rather to improve the followers feelings in the way to the true path. The dancing is done in the form of turns. The circles are the reproduction of celestial orbits which will lead to the realization of the forms of the universe.¹² That is to say, they can attain the Form, or Giver of forms, God. The dancing is done by the whirling dervishes harmoniously in a group, first in imitation and then ending in reunification with the One. When the trance is attained the dancing stops. Finally, the Mawlawi session could include people from different sects because according to them, God is knowledgeable about everyone's intentions and thus

¹¹Shaykh 'Abd-al-Ghani al-Nabulsi, al-'Uqūd al-Lu'lu'iyah fi Tarīqat al-Sūdat al-Mawlawiyah (Damascus: Matba'at al-Turqi, 1932, 1st ed.), p. 20.

¹²Ibid., p. 30.

there is no secrecy, contrary again to the Naqshabandi session.

A second important doctrinal observation is the concept of Light. There are two interpretations, one exoteric, the other esoteric. The Suhrawardis interpret the "doctrine of Light" esoterically, that God is Light, which is a bud'a (innovation) and is unacceptable by orthodox Islam. It is this interpretation which caused differences among Naqshabandis in later times. The concept of Light, among other Naqshabandi practices, was later condemned as a source of confusion and innovation by Naqshabandis. The highlights of these differences were articulated by Shellabear in his translation of "An Exposure of Counterfeiters" of a Malay treatise. The translated text explains that those

who believe that Allah is a shining Light which has nothing like it are kāfirs.... those who believe that Allah is like that are unbelievers, for they believe that Allah has the quality of shining, and shining is an originated quality, like the quality of fire and the sun and everything that shines. The faithful has no doubt that those who have such a belief as that are unbelievers, for they believe that Allah is Light. Their unbelief is caused by their ignorance of the qualities of Allah and the Science of his Unity (Tawhīd). 13

¹³W. G. Shellabear, "An Exposure of Counterfeiters," Moslem World, vol. 20, 1930, p. 361. (Shellabear discusses a Malay treatise which was written by 'Almad Khātīb Ibn 'Abdu'l-Latīf as an exposure of "false teachings and irregular practices of certain teachers of the Naqshabandi Brotherhood in that part of Sumatra." He expounds on five questions, concluding that the order should urge the study of the sciences, Fiqh, Tawhīd and Tasawwuf.)

The doctrine of Light which is accepted by Naqshabndis is that of an exoteric interpretation, the Light of God. The reference to Light by a Naqshabandi is used metaphorically; that is, God gives the gift of grace to the one who repents and lives according to the tariqa. The Light of God is a medium through which the souls of the believers are unified on one level and through the silsila which functions as a communicator between the hearts and the Light of God, which is grace, on the other. This one doctrinal controversy is brought out here only to make the reader aware that whatever is generally accepted in a given tariqa does not necessitate absolute standards for adherence, only relative to time and place.

In conclusion, Sufism as an institution sprang and was nurtured, as in other religions, as a result of general conditions and causes within the structures of the society. Sufism not only was one of the factors that expressed the spirit of society in religious and social terms, it was a way of life to a Muslim. According to Williams, it took the place of "church denominations, social club, Masonic lodge, night school, burial association and marching society."¹⁴

When man in society finds anxieties and conflicts in a given path, there has to be alternate routes of departure, if not, then some conceptualization of thoughts and ideas must stem to fill the vacuum for him. If there are too many external obstacles, then an internal reign takes hold to give meaning and order to man's existence and self

¹⁴John Alden Williams, Islam (New York: George Braziller, 1962), p. 169.

fulfillment. If man cannot find spiritual and intellectual answers inwardly, he must find order and meaning in the external world. The balances must be met in man and he must find his self and inner strength, both spiritually and socially. In other words, the relationships between man and man, and man and God must be clarified and realized. The range for its attainment is wide; be it on one pole the use of narcotics such as LSD and alcohol, or on the other, concentration and contemplation as with a Naqshabandi Sufi.

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PAPER

Bell, Joseph. A paper presented in a seminar on "Political Change in the Middle East," conducted by Dr. Alfred M. Halpern, at Princeton University. 1964.

INTERVIEW

Egypt. Personal interview with Shaykh Sayyid al-Nuwwar, a Naqshabandi, and a professor at the American University of Cairo.

1. The first part of the report discusses the general situation of the country and the progress of the work.

2. The second part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

3. The third part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

4. The fourth part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

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15. The fifteenth part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

16. The sixteenth part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

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21. The twenty-first part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

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23. The twenty-third part of the report discusses the results of the work and the progress of the work.

An interesting observation that I found in researching the silsila was a discrepancy regarding the biographical data of the Naqshabandi order as to its exact origin. The Encyclopedia of Islam indicated that Muhammad Baha' al-Din al-Bukhari is the founder of the order and that it was propagated from India. This was the general consensus among Oriental scholars including the eminent H. A. R. Gibb who stated that the order, founded in the fourteenth century in Central Asia, also gained impetus in India.¹

Inayat Khan, an Indian mystic, indicated that the roots of Sufism reached back to a Sufi school which existed in Egypt; however, he did not indicate the particular school. From this school, he further asserted, four others developed, one of which was the Naqshabandi order; from these schools, branches sprang forth in Arabia, Palestine, Turkey, Tartary, Bokhara, Afghanistan, India, Siberia, and other parts of Asia.² On the other hand, Brown asserted that after the Prophet's death 45 citizens in Mecca took oaths of "fidelity to the doctrines of their Prophet and formed a sect or fraternity...."³ He further asserted that the first known order was the "Olwanees" founded by Shaykh Olwan, A. D. 766, at Jedda which was later perfected by the Qadiris.⁴

¹Gibb, p. 163.

²Khan, vol. iii, p. 18.

³Brown, p. 207.

⁴Ibid., p. 209.

Furthermore, Reynold Nicholson believed that Ma'rūf al-Karkhi, an Iraqi, who died in 815 A.D., founded the oldest known Sufi definition.⁵ According to the second silsila of the Naqshabandi order, Ma'rūf al-Karkhi was the shaykh of the first chain and the two chains united with him. The death of 'Abi 'Alī al-Farmadi, who is mentioned in the first chain as being the shaykh of the third silsila, is 470/1078 as H. A. Rose indicates. Rose also includes a biographical sketch of 'Abd-al-Khāliq al-Ghajdawāni (d. 575/1179-80).⁶ The works of al-Ghajdawāni who recited the dhikr silently ----- see Chapter II ----- later became the basis of the Naqshabandi dhikr. While al-Bukhārī, who is considered the founder, collected the sayings of al-Ghajdawāni. Furthermore, as stated earlier the Naqshabandi order is indebted in its strength and diffusion to al-Ghajdawāni's leadership.

The point to be made here is that the silsila is no longer a spiritual connection without historical proof. If the above assertions are valid, and there is no evidence to the contrary, al-Ghajdawāni or some other shaykh mentioned in the silsila founded the Naqshabandi order prior to the fourteenth century. In either case the order was established prior to the general consensus of opinion among Orientalists. As to Khan's assertion that the Naqshabandi order began in Egypt, there is no sufficient proof to substantiate this claim. Since the first

⁵Nicholson, Literary, p. 385.

⁶H. A. Rose, "Some Problems in Naqshabandi History," The Indian Antiquary, vol. 52, 1923, p. 204.

order began in Jedda, it is possible that the Naqshabandi order was first established in Egypt, propagated in Kurdistan where popular veneration of shaykhs and other unorthodox practices were common in the fourteenth century, revitalized in the eighteenth century under Shaykh Khālīd, further gained impetus in later centuries in India. At the same time its mystical concepts were being perfected here. Since the Naqshabandi order flourished in Syria in the nineteenth century, it could have been reintroduced or revitalized in Egypt in the 1900's. The reason for this reintroduction stems from the fact that oftentimes the orders and sects go astray when the shaykh, who is virtually the absolute master of a given area, dies.